

PS-10.17, "CHARACTER - BASED UNITS AND PROGRAMS,"

SCDC POLICY/PROCEDURE

NUMBER: PS-10.17

TITLE: CHARACTER - BASED UNITS AND PROGRAMS

ISSUE DATE: May 4, 2015

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY: DIVISION OF INMATE SERVICES

OPERATIONS MANUAL: PROGRAM SERVICES

SUPERSEDES: NONE - PS-10.15- NEW POLICY

RELEVANT SCDC FORMS/SUPPLIES: Automated Request To Staff Member (ARTSM); Attachment A; Attachment B

ACA/CAC STANDARDS: 4-4277, 4-4428 STATE/FEDERAL STATUTES: South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 1-32-10, et seq., as amended.

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines for the development and monitoring of Character-Based Unit (CBU) Programs.

POLICY STATEMENT: Within the limitations imposed on the South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC) as a result of its safety and security needs, SCDC will be committed to providing programming that will assist inmates to become more successful members of society and help to reduce the recidivism rates of these inmates. Character based programs are designed to assist with inmate institutional adjustment, rehabilitation, successful re-entry into the community upon release, the reduction of recidivism, and improved institutional security. Character - Based Programs provide the structure, resources, and environment to increase opportunities for personal growth and collective change. (4-4428)

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SPECIFIC PROCEDURES:

1. PROGRAM GOALS:

1.1 The Primary Goals Of Character-Based Programs Are:

- Providing structured activities/classes that teach inmates positive thinking skills;
- Teaching inmates better decision making process to assist them in their everyday lives;
- Promoting better self-image and self-acceptance;
- Reducing behavior issues that lead to negative interaction with individuals/groups in society;
- Reducing recidivism through positive programming;
- Emphasizing educational growth and development;
- Assisting inmates in creating a new value system; and
- Promoting positive peer support.

2. ESTABLISHING A NEW CHARACTER-BASED UNIT (CBU): Institutions interested in establishing a new CBU will follow the outline below in the initial establishment phase:

- Hold a general staff meeting to explain/introduce the CBU concept and start the staff buy-in process.
- Select the Program Coordinator (preferably the Associate Warden of Programs or equivalent.)
- Establish the Institutional CBU Administrative Committee (see guidelines below.)
- Determine the optimum location for the CBU.
- Identify the Inmate Coordinators using the criteria below, excluding the one (1) year in the program. Send the new Inmate Coordinators to an institution with an established program so that they can experience the

CBU concept and begin to assist with the planning of the new unit.

- The CBU Administrative Committee and the Inmate Coordinator will work together to develop the social contract for the CBU participants (see example, Appendix A).
- Announce the program to the general population and begin to take applications. NOTE: Screening of application as outlined below.
- Begin to solicit volunteers and other community support for the unit.
- Begin to identify programs for the unit.
- When applications are processed and successful candidates are identified, hold an organizational meeting to serve as the initial program orientation and contract signing.
- Work with Classification to establish the procedure to begin moving inmates to the CBU.

3. LEADERSHIP AND OVERSIGHT:

3.1 Program Coordinator: Preferably the Associate Warden of Programs, or a full time employee with treatment and programs experience. This individual is tasked with directing, evaluating, and monitoring all aspects of the Character Based Program. The Coordinator works directly with staff, inmates and volunteers to develop, implement, and evaluate specific programs and resources related to the Program.

3.2 Character Based Program Administrative Committee: The primary council of employees that works closely with the inmate leadership to advance the strong rehabilitative objectives of the Program. Members of the Committee are typically selected by the Program Coordinator, with the Warden's concurrence, based on their expertise in various areas as well as a demonstrated interest in the rehabilitative/restorative goals of the Program. The recommended composition of the Committee is: Program Coordinator (Chairman); Security (A/W of Operations, Major, or Administrative Captain); Chaplain; Behavioral Health Counselor; Classification Case Manager or Caseworker; Administrative Support (Administrative Assistant or Administrative Specialist). The Committee should meet weekly to review unit activities, programmatic changes, problematic issues, recommendations for removal, Inmate Coordinator performance, etc.

3.3 Inmate Coordinators: A group of inmates carefully selected for their demonstrated leadership abilities, integrity, and excellent reputation. They act as mentors for both inmates in the Program and inmates in other living units to assist them with adjustment; act as mediators involving inmate/inmate and inmate/staff issues; review and recommend classes and class schedules; conduct quarterly peer reviews on all Program residents and present them to the Committee; act as liaisons between the Committee and Program residents; actively participate with the Committee in the conceptualization, planning and implementation of various programs and projects within the Program; and provide outreach to inmates from other housing units. As set forth in SCDC Policy OP-22.15, "Inmate Governance," section 5, it is important to understand that these responsibilities in no way imply that the Inmate Coordinators have control or authority over any staff and/or inmates. All contact to recruit programs and/or supplies will be the sole responsibility of the CBU Administrative Committee. The Inmate Coordinator will not make direct contact with any entity to provide/solicit assistance or services.

3.4 Selection Of Inmate Coordinators: While specific selection criteria may vary from one Program to the next as determined by the Warden and Committee, some criteria are absolute. They are:

- Meet all of the requirements of a Program participant (see criteria below).
- A Program resident for a minimum of one (1) year (unless the institution is establishing a new Program).
- An inmate mentor for a minimum of six (6) months (unless the institution is establishing a new Program).
An inmate mentor is defined as a participant who agrees to provide guidance, counseling, peer support, etc. to a new participant or a participant in need of such guidance.
- Specifically demonstrated history of exceeding what is required in terms of meaningful interaction with others, conceptualization and development of program ideas, outreach, etc.
- Good reputation and integrity as determined by staff and peers.

Institutions should set the optimum number of Inmate Coordinators for each wing based on total wing population.

4. APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS:

4.1.Application: Inmates will initiate the application process by sending an Automated Request to Staff Member (ARTSM) to the designated employee of the appropriate institution, requesting admission to the Character Based Program. The designated employee will screen the inmate's record to determine if the inmate meets the minimum qualifications which are:

- One (1) year with no major disciplinary conviction;
- Six (6) months with no administrative resolutions;
- At least six (6) months in general population;
- High school diploma/GED, or enrollment in education;
- Evidence of meaningful program involvement; and
- Consistent employment history within the inmate's physical/mental limitations.

The inmate is then allowed to complete a CBU application form (Attachment A). Applicants are scheduled for a pre-orientation meeting in which information about the CBU is presented and the applicants have an opportunity to interact with inmates from the unit. The orientation is typically presented by CBU Inmate Coordinators, but an employee will be present during the orientation.

4.2 Selection: The CBU Administrative Committee will meet to discuss applicants, review all available information, both formal and informal. A consensus will be reached by the Committee as to whether an applicant is a good candidate in terms of what the applicant brings to the program. The Committee will make the final decision. Once selected, the applicant will be moved into the first available bed based on classification guidelines and perceived compatibility. No inmate will be excluded from the application/selection process based on race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or medical/mental health reasons. (4-4277)

4.3 Custody Requirements: Inmates must be in Minimum-In (MI), Minimum-Restricted (MR), or Minimum-Out (MO) custody. Medium (ME) custody inmates can be considered on an individual basis.

5. FORMAL ORIENTATION, INDUCTION, AND SIGNING OF THE SOCIAL CONTRACT:

5.1 Once a resident receives a housing assignment in the CBU, a series of events take place that solidify his/her place in the community.

5.1.1 First, the new resident is greeted by members of the community who have accepted the specific responsibility of making newcomers feel welcome. If the new resident has already been assigned to an inmate mentor, the inmate mentor explains the CBU's opportunities and expectations to the new resident.

5.1.2 As soon as possible, the new resident undergoes orientation. This orientation should include a meeting conducted by several Inmate Coordinators and should be led by at least one staff member.

5.1.3 During this orientation, the Community Rules and Social Contract are explained, as are the accountability process and goals of mutual respect and personal development. The setting is friendly and should be designed to allow for, and address any questions, concerns or doubts the resident may have about his/her new community, and its expectations.

5.2 Town Hall Meetings:

5.2.1 Town Hall Meetings will be held to give the participants the opportunity to discuss the business of the community in an open, formal setting. The meeting should be chaired by the Program Coordinator/designee and should take place weekly. NOTE: Minutes will be taken by a designated Inmate Coordinator, and will be reviewed by the Administrative Committee.

5.2.2 During the Town Hall Meeting, the new resident is formally inducted into the community by reading and publicly signing the Social Contract (Attachment B). The new participant should be given the opportunity to address the community, telling them in the participants's own words both who the participant is today, and how the participant hopes the CBU will help him/her to become a better person. This not only gives the community the opportunity to meet the new participants, it gives the new participants the opportunity to explain his/her current situation and plan for personal development.

6. VOLUNTEERS:

Institutions are encouraged to work with and utilize a wide variety of volunteers to enhance the CBU programs. The Committee and the Inmate Coordinators will work together to design and implement innovative programming utilizing volunteers. Volunteers are subject to the requirements of SCDC Policy PS-10.04, Volunteer Services Programs. The Administrative Committee is responsible for all communication in regards to the development of volunteer based programs/services.

6.1 Inmate And Volunteer Mentors: Character based programs may offer mentoring/instruction by registered volunteers and inmate mentors to each inmate. The size of the program will vary according to availability of appropriate mentors. In programs where one-on-one volunteer mentoring is used, mentoring topics will be geared towards personal growth in ethical behavior and interpersonal relationships. Inmate mentors will be used to provide guidance, counseling, peer support, etc. to new participants or participants

in need of such guidance. Reasonable efforts will be made to match inmates with either inmate or volunteer mentors who are best suited to address the individual inmate's needs. Mentors, where used, will be assigned as available by the Administrative volunteer coordinator Committee with input from the Coordinators.

7. PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES:

7.1 Character Based Units place a heavy emphasis on involvement in specific programs and activities. Residents who do not have a verified High School diploma or GED are required to be actively enrolled in and participating in formal Education classes. Those who are unable to read or for whom English is a second language are required to be involved in classes to improve their skills.

7.2 A wide range of volunteer-led and inmate-led classes and groups are available to inmate residents. Skill building, self disclosure, self help, instructional, spiritual, and educational groups may be chosen. Inmate work schedules should be taken into account when developing program schedules.

7.3 The Committee, with recommendation from the Inmate Coordinators, may require that a resident take certain specific programs or groups based on documented behavioral issues, educational needs, committing offense(s), etc. Minimally, residents must participate in at least two (2) groups/programs each quarter.

7.4 Programs may include, but not be limited to the following:

- Personal Faith
- Life Skills
- Anger Management
- Parenting Skills
- Marriage Enrichment
- Personal Finance Studies
- Job & Interview Skills
- Victim Awareness
- Substance Abuse

7.4 No programs will be offered in character-based units that:

- Promote conversion of inmates toward a particular faith or religious preference or criticize the faith of others.
- Promote negative attitudes against inmates based on race, creed, religious preference or sexual orientation.

7.5 Inmates will be actively involved in classes/activities/mentoring offered at all times that they are scheduled to attend. Each program will provide an outline of activities offered to inmates and an example of class/activity/mentoring schedule for approval by Programs and Services once a year. These classes/activities/mentoring sessions will promote the goals of this policy.

7.6 Members of the community are not authorized to contact any outside entity for the purpose of establishing programming for the unit. All such requests will be run through the Institutional Administrative Committee or the Division of Programs and Services at Headquarters.

8. ENCOUNTERS/CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

8.1 In the spirit of peer support, the CBU will promote a positive and healthy approach to addressing disagreements and objectionable behavior. In all cases, participants will approach these matters in a calm and non-accusatory manner. Initial encounters can be held informally in one-on-one meetings but should be documented. If the offending behavior continues, the encounter should be held formally and with at least three participants involved, including one coordinator. The encounter will be documented. If the behavior continues the matter will be brought to the attention of the Administrative Committee.

8.2 It is highly encouraged to use the encounter process to also recognize those members of the community who have displayed exemplary behavior or who have provided services that benefit the community and/or the institution as a whole.

9. REMOVAL FROM THE CBU:

9.1 When it is recognized that a participant is exhibiting behavior that violates the social contract, and mentoring and peer support fails to positively correct the behavior, the Inmate Coordinators will present a recommendation to the CBU Administrative Committee as to the potential removal of the offending participant. After review, the Committee will make a determination. If the Committee decides to remove the participant, he/she will be informed and given terms for possible future reinstatement. If a participant recognizes that he/she is not living up to the social contract, he/she is expected to remove himself/herself from the program. An ex-participant will be required to wait a minimum of six (6) months to reapply for admission.

SIGNATURE ON FILE

—

s/Bryan P. Stirling, Director

ORIGINAL SIGNED COPY MAINTAINED IN THE OFFICE OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Attachment A

CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION CHARACTER-BASED UNIT APPLICATION

For Committee Use Only:

Approved for List

Not Approved for List

Date

Date Completed: _____

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION:

Name: _____ SCDC#: _____ Custody Level: _____

Current Living Unit: _____ How long have you been at this Institution? _____ Sentence
Length: _____ Offense(s): _____

Are you employed at this Institution? YES NO

If so, where, and how long? _____

If not, are you willing to work? YES NO

What level of education have you completed? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 GED
Some College Associate's Degree Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree

If you do not have a diploma or GED, are you willing to get one? YES NO

When was your last disciplinary charge? _____

What were you convicted of ? _____

How many disciplinary actions do you have on your record? _____

How well do you get along with other inmates and staff? _____

Are there inmates or staff that you just can't get along with, no matter what? YES NO

Why? _____

Have you ever lived in a CBU before? YES NO

When were you there ? _____

Why did you leave? _____

What do you feel your strengths are? (List positive things about you, work skills you have, talents,
etc.) _____

What are your weaknesses? (List what you need help with, or negative things about you.

(Be honest! It's OK!) _____

Tell us why you feel you would be a good fit for a CBU? Why should you be considered?

Thank you for completing our application! We are thrilled you are interested in CBU!

Inmate's Signature and Date: _____

Staff Member Witness and Date: _____

Committee Member's Signature and Date: _____

The CBU is dedicated and committed to the restoration of the lives - offenders, their families, and society - of those impacted by crime and of antisocial and destructive values. The CBU promotes the personal development of offenders by teaching and reinforcing pro-social values, thinking, attitudes, and behaviors through peer accountability. The ultimate vision and goal of the CBU is to contribute to the quality of life of South Carolinians everywhere.

Attachment B

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

CHARACTER-BASED SOCIAL CONTRACT

By my signature below, I, _____, SCDC# _____ hereby declare that I willfully request to enter into a social contract with the _____ Institution Character-Based Unit. I have been advised of the social contract and its rules, and that I will submit to them. I am also advised that I will be under peer review and that I will be judged and removed by my peers from this community if they determine that I have violated this contract.

1. Respect others by controlling noise levels (i.e. talking, bouncing balls, religious activities will be done in a moderate tone, games on the rock, dragging feet, music from cells, etc.). Breach of contract is defined as any noise that can be heard from a distance of eight feet away.

2. Respect others by maintaining personal hygiene (i.e. showering daily, breath/brushing teeth, clean clothes/bedding). Breach of contract is defined as any odor, fluid, or mess that offends another person as a result of their closeness.

3. Respect others who live in and clean the living area. Breach of contract is defined as any mess, trash/litter left, cleaning of bowls in showers, graffiti, abuse of the living area, or not cleaning up behind oneself.

4. Respect others by controlling physical contact. Breach of contract is defined as any threatening/abusive gestures or contact, horseplay, or bullying.

5. Respect others by not taking possession of property that is not your own. Breach of contract is defined as taking or possession of personal property without the owners permission.

6. Respect others by giving them their own personal space (in cells, physical crowding, etc.). Breach of contract is defined as any crowding upon the space identified as uniquely, reasonable, or personal, to include brushing against another person.

7. Respect others by controlling verbal communication. Breach of contract is defined as any threatening, abusive, agitating, antagonizing, indifferent or inconsiderate verbal communication to any person.

8. Respect others by scheduling personal activities at a time/place that does not interfere or disturb another person. Breach of contract is defined as any activity that prevents the activity of another person who has an expectation or right to the space/time, such as cleaning, washing, exercising, or monopolization of the microwave.

9. Respect the requests/orders of any person acting in an official capacity/position. Breach of contract is defined as failure to comply with the verbal requests or directives from any officer, staff member, program coordinator or community official in their official capacity.

10. Respect yourself by never acting in a way that degrades your human dignity, that of another person, or the community. Breach of contract is defined as actions such as sexual deviancy, all sexual acts, self-mutilation, tattooing, displaying indifference to others, verbally ridiculing yourself or another, gossiping, slandering, plotting against another person or belittling the reputation of the community.

DATE

SIGNATURE